



Most Parents Unaware of Medical Research Opportunities for Their Kids

National Poll on Children's Health

Over the last 100 years, infant mortality in the United States has been reduced by 90 percent. Millions of deaths from diseases such as polio, diphtheria, pneumonia and influenza have been prevented by vaccines. Thousands of children with diseases such as cystic fibrosis, sickle cell disease and diabetes now often survive beyond childhood, into their adult years.

All these advances have been made possible through medical research. Importantly, successful pediatric research requires the voluntary participation of children and the support of their parents. Not much is known about public participation in medical research for children, or for adults.

In January 2011, the C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health asked adults and parents about their views on medical research and past participation.

Participation in Research

About 1 in 9 adults have participated in medical research. In contrast, 1 in 20 children have participated (Figure 1).

Participation in medical research by adults is higher among non-Hispanic whites (14%) than among Hispanics (4%) or non-Hispanic blacks (2%).

Participation in medical research by children does not differ by children's race or ethnicity. In addition, children's participation is not related to whether the children themselves have fair or poor health.

Awareness of Medical Research

Most adults (68%) are aware of medical research opportunities for adults. In contrast, the majority of parents (84%) are *not* aware of medical research opportunities for children.

Parents with higher household income levels and who have fair or poor health themselves are more likely to be aware of medical research opportunities for children or to have had their children participate in medical research.

Implications

Medical research is the backbone of improving medical care. Without volunteers, medical research cannot move forward.

In May 2008, the C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health reported that 10% of adults and 4% of children in the United States had participated in medical research. Such low rates of public participation raised serious questions about how sustainable medical research can be. Now, three years later, researchers and research institutions (both public and private) have not succeeded in moving the needle.

Awareness about research opportunities, which is a necessary step before participation, is reasonably high

among adults but strikingly low for children's research. To improve participation rates among children, boosting awareness must be a major priority.

While there are disparities related to race/ethnicity for adult participation in research, there are no racial/ethnic disparities for kids related either to participation or awareness. This positive finding sets an equitable foundation for future efforts to expand awareness and then recruit children for medical research.

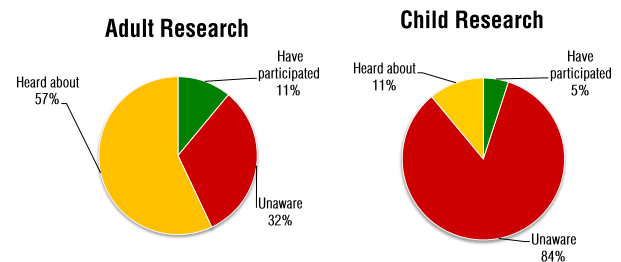
Report Highlights

In the U.S., 11% of adults and 5% of children have participated in medical research.

84% of parents are unaware of medical research opportunities for children.

Income, not race/ethnicity, is related to participation and awareness about medical research opportunities for kids.

Figure 1. Awareness and Participation in Medical Research



Source: C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health, 2011

A publication from C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, the University of Michigan Department of Pediatrics and Communicable Diseases, and the University of Michigan Child Health Evaluation and Research (CHEAR)



This report presents findings from a nationally representative household survey conducted exclusively by Knowledge Networks, Inc. (KN), for C.S. Mott Children's Hospital via a method used in many published studies. The survey was administered in January 2011 to a randomly selected, stratified group of adults age 18 and older (n=2,150) from the KN standing panel that closely resembles the U.S. population. The sample was subsequently weighted to reflect population figures from the Census Bureau. The survey completion rate was 60% among panel members contacted to participate. The margin of sampling error is ± 1 to 3 percentage points.

Findings from the C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health do not represent the opinions of the investigators or the opinions of the University of Michigan. The University of Michigan reserves all rights over this material.

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